

*A England-Congregational Churches in*

**A**

# **DECLARATION**

**OF THE**

**FAITH AND ORDER**

**OWNED, AND PRACTISED, IN THE**

**CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES,**

**IN**

**ENGLAND;**

**AGREED UPON, AND CONSENTED TO,**

**BY THEIR**

**ELDERS AND MESSENGERS,**

**IN**

**THEIR MEETING AT THE SAVOY,**

**OCTOBER 12, MDCLVIII.**

**L O N D O N :**

**Reprinted in the Year MDCCXXIX,**

DECLARATION

OF THE

ORDER

OF THE

ENGLAND



AND MESSRS

IN

THE MUSEUM AT THE SAVOY

ON THE 15th OF JULY 1851

LONDON

Reprinted in the Year MDCCCLXIX.



## ADVERTISEMENT.

**T**HE copies of the confession agreed upon, by the elders and messengers of the congregational churches, in their assembly, at the Savoy, growing very scarce, it was necessary to print a small number, for the use of some private persons. On this occasion, it was judg'd proper to add, from the edition printed by Mr. John Field 1659, the preface, prefixed to the confession, by Dr. OWEN, with the concurrence of Dr. GOODWIN, Mr. NYE, Mr. BRIDGE, Mr. CARYL, Mr. GREENHILL, and Mr. GRIFFITH scribe to the Assembly, who were the committee appointed by the messengers of the congregational churches to draw up a confession of faith, to be presented to them, in their general meeting, for their approbation, and to whom the care of publishing it, after it was approv'd, was committed.

6 JU 62

## T H E

## P R E F A C E.

**C**onfession of the faith that is in us, when justly called for, is so indispensable a due all owe to the glory of the sovereign God, that it is ranked among the duties of the first commandment, such as prayer is; and therefore is by Paul yoked with faith it self, as necessary to salvation: “ \* With the heart man believeth to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation.” Our Lord Christ himself, when he was accused of his doctrine, considered simply as a matter of fact by preaching; refused to answer; because, as such, it lay upon evidence, and matter of testimony of others; to whom therefore he refers himself: But when both the high-priest and Pilate expostulate his faith, and what he held himself to be; he without any demur at all, cheerfully makes declaration, That he was the Son of God; so to the high-priest: and that he was a king, and born to be a king, thus to Pilate; tho’ upon the uttering

\* Rom. x. 10.

ii THE PREFACE.

of it his life lay at stake : Which holy profession of his is celebrated for our example, by the apostle Paul.<sup>b</sup>

When confessions are made by a company of professors of Christianity jointly meeting to that end, the most genuine and natural use of such confessions is, That under the same form of words, they express the substance of the same common salvation, or unity of their faith ; whereby “ speaking the same things, they shew themselves perfectly joined in the same mind, and in the same judgment.”<sup>c</sup>

And accordingly such a transaction is to be looked upon only as a meet or fit medium, or means, whereby to express that their common faith and salvation, and no way to be made use of as an imposition upon any : Whatever is of force or constraint in matters of this nature, causes them to degenerate from the name and nature of confessions, and turns them from being confessions of faith, into exactions and impositions of faith.

And such common confessions of the orthodox faith, made in simplicity of heart by any such body of Christians, with concord among themselves, ought to be entertained by all others that love the truth as it is in Jesus, with an answerable rejoicing : For if

<sup>b</sup> 1 Tim. vi. 13.

<sup>c</sup> 1 Cor. i. 10.

## THE PREFACE. ii

the unanimous opinions and assertions in some few points of religion, and that when only two churches, namely, that of Jerusalem, and the messengers of Antioch, met, assisted by some of the apostles, were by the believers of those times received with so much joy, that it is said, " They rejoiced for the consolation " ; <sup>d</sup> much more this is to be done, when the whole substance of faith, and form of wholesome words shall be declared by the messengers of a multitude of churches, tho' wanting those advantages of counsel and authority of the apostles, which that assembly had.

Which acceptation is then more especially due, when these shall (to choose) utter and declare their faith, in the same substance for matter, yea, words, for the most part, that other churches and assemblies, reputed the most orthodox, have done before them : For upon such a correspondence, all may see that actually accomplished ; which the apostle did but exhort to, and pray for, in those two more eminent churches of the Corinthians and the Romans ; (and so in them for all the Christians of his time) that both Jew and Gentile, that is men of different persuasions, (as they were) " might glorify God with one mind and with one mouth. <sup>e</sup> " And truly the very turning of the Gentiles to the own-

<sup>d</sup> Acts xv. 31.

<sup>e</sup> Rom. xv. 6, 8, 9.



iv THE PREFACE.

ing of the same faith, in the substance of it, with the Christian Jew, (though differing in greater points than we do from our brethren) is presently after dignified by the apostle with this stile, That it is the confession of Jesus Christ himself; not as the object only, but as the author and maker thereof: “ I will confess to thee (saith Christ to God) among the Gentiles.<sup>f</sup>” So that in all such accords, Christ is the great and first confessor; and we, and all our faith uttered by us, are but the epistles and confessions of our Lord; He, but expressing what is written in his heart, through our hearts and mouths, to the glory of God the Father: And shall not we all rejoice herein, when Christ himself is said to do it upon this occasion? as it there also follows, I will sing to thy name.

Farther, as the soundness and wholsomeness of the matter gives the vigor and life to such confessions, so the inward freeness, willingness and readiness of the spirits of the confessors contribute beauty and loveliness thereto: as in prayer to God, so in confessions made to men, if two or three met, do agree, it renders both, to either the more acceptable. The Spirit of Christ is in himself too free, great and generous a Spirit, to suffer himself to be used by any hu-

<sup>f</sup> Rom. xv. 9. Psalm xviii. 49.



## THE PREFACE. v

man arm, to whip men into belief; he drives not, but gently leads into all truth, and persuades men to dwell in the tents of like precious faith; which would lose of its preciousness and value, if that sparkle of freeness shone not in it: The character of his people, is to be a “willing people in the day of his power, (not man’s) in the beauties of holiness,<sup>s</sup>” which are the assemblings of the saints: one glory of which assemblings in the first church, is said to have been, “They met with one accord;<sup>h</sup>” which is in that psalm prophesied of, in the instance of that first church, for all other that should succeed.

And as this great Spirit is in himself free, when, and how far, and in whom to work, so where and when he does work, he carries it with the same freedom, and is said to be a free Spirit, as he both is, and works in us, and where this Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Now, as to this confession of ours, besides, that a conspicuous conjunction of the particulars mentioned, has appeared therein: There are also four remarkable attendants thereon, which added, might perhaps in the eyes of sober and indifferent spirits, give the whole of this transaction a room and rank amongst other many good and memorable

<sup>s</sup> Psalm cx. 3.

<sup>h</sup> Acts. ii. 1.

things of this age; at least all set together cast as clear a gleam and manifestation of God's power and presence, as has appeared in any such kind of confessions, made by so numerous a company these later years.

The first, is the temper of the times, during which, these churches have been gathering, and which they have run through. All out of a general sense complain, that the times have been perillous, or difficult times; (as the apostle foretold) and that in respect to danger from seducing spirits, more perillous than the hottest seasons of persecution. We have sailed through an estuation, fluxes and refluxes of great varieties of spirits, doctrines, opinions and occurrences; and especially in the matter of opinions, which have been accompanied in their several seasons, with powerful persuasions and temptations, to seduce those of our way. It is known men have taken the freedom, (notwithstanding what authority hath interposed to the contrary) to vent and vend their own vain and accursed imaginations, contrary to the great and fixed truths of the gospel; so that if we take the whole round and circle of delusions, the devil has in this small time, run, it will be found, that every truth, of greater or less weight, has by one or other hand, at one time or another, been questioned and called to the bar amongst us, and impleaded, under the pretext (which  
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## THE PREFACE. vii

has some degree of justice in it) that all should not be bound up to the traditions of former times, nor take religion upon trust.

Whence it has come to pass, that many of the soundest professors were put upon a new search and disquisition of such truths, as they had taken for granted, and yet had lived upon the comfort of; to the end they might be able to convince others, and establish their own hearts against that darkness and unbelief, that is ready to close with error, or at least to doubt of the truth, when error is speciously presented. And hereupon we professedly account it one of the greatest advantages gained out of the temptations of these times; and the honour of the saints and ministers of these nations, That after they had sweetly been exercised in, and had improved practical and experimental truths, this should be their farther lot, to examine and discuss, and indeed, anew to learn over every doctrinal truth, both out of the scriptures, and also with a fresh taste thereof in their own hearts; which is no other than what the apostle exhorts to, "Try all things, hold fast that which is good. <sup>i</sup>" Conversion to God at first, what is it else than a savory and affectionate application, and the bringing home to the heart, with spiritual light and life, all truths that are necessary

<sup>i</sup> 1 Thes. v. 21.

viii THE PREFACE.

to salvation, together with other less truths? all which we had before conversion taken in but notionally from common education and tradition.

Now that after this first gust those who have been thus converted should be put upon a new probation and search out of the scriptures, not only of all principles explicitly ingredient to conversion<sup>k</sup>; (to which the apostle refer'd the Galatians when they had diverted from them) but of all other superstructures as well as fundamentals, and together therewith, anew to experience the power and sweetness of all these in their own souls: What is this but tryed faith indeed, and equivalent to a new conversion to the truth? An anchor that is proved to be sure and stedfast, that will certainly hold in all contrary storms: This was the eminent seal and commendation which those holy apostles that lived and wrote last, Peter, John and Jude, in their epistles set and gave to the Christians of the later part of those primitive times. And besides, it is clear and evident by all the other epistles, from first to last, that it cost the apostles as much, and far more care and pains to preserve them they had converted, in the truth, then they had taken to turn them thereto at first: And it is in itself as great a work and instance

<sup>k</sup> This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you Gal. v. 8.



## T H E P R E F A C E. ix

of the power of God, <sup>1</sup>that keeps, yea, guards us through faith to falvation.

Secondly, let this be added, (or superadded rather) to give full weight and measure, that we have all along this season, held forth (though quarrelled with for it by our brethren) this great principle of these times, That amongst all christian states and churches, there ought to be vouchsafed a forbearance and mutual indulgence to saints of all persuasions, that keep to, and hold fast the necessary foundations of faith and holiness, in all other matters extrafundamental, whether of faith or order.

This to have been our constant principle, we are not ashamed to confess to the whole christian world. Wherein yet we desire we may be understood, not as if, in the abstract, we stood indifferent to falshood or truth, or were careless whether faith or error, in any truths but fundamental were to obtain or not, so we had our liberty in our petty and smaller differences: or as if to make sure of that, we had cut out this wide cloak for it: No, we profess that the whole, and every particle of that faith delivered to the saints, (the substance of which we have according to our light here professed) is, as to the propagation and furtherance of it by all gospel-means, as precious to us as our

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. i. 5.

x THE PREFACE.

lives ; or what can be supposed dear to us ; and in our sphere we have endeavoured to promote them accordingly : But yet withall, we have contended and still contend, (and if we had all the power which any, or all of our brethren of differing opinions have desired to have over us, or others, we should freely grant it to them all) we have contended and still contend for this, That in the concrete, the persons of all such gracious saints, they and their errors, as they are in them, when they are but such errors as do and may stand with communion with Christ, tho' they should not repent of them, as not being convinced of them to the end of their days ; that those, with their errors (that are purely spiritual, and intrench and overthrow not civil societies,) as concrete with their persons, should for Christ's sake be born with by all Christians in the world ; and they be permitted to enjoy all ordinances and spiritual privileges, according to their light, as freely as any other of their brethren that pretend to the greatest orthodoxies ; as having as equal, and as fair a right in and to Christ, and all the holy things of Christ, as any other can challenge to themselves.

And this affords a full and invincible testimony on our behalf, in that while we have so earnestly contended for this just liberty of saints in all the churches of Christ, we to  
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## THE PREFACE. xi

ourselves have had no need of it: that is, as to the matter of the profession of faith which we have maintained together with others: and of this, the subsequent confession of faith gives sufficient evidence. So that we have the confidence in Christ, to utter in the words of those two great apostles, That we have stood fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free (in the behalf of others, rather than our selves) and having been free, have not made use of our liberty for a cloak of error or maliciousness in our selves: And whereas from the beginning of the rearing of these churches, that of the apostle has been (by some) prophesied of us, and applied to us, <sup>m</sup> That whilst we promised (to others) liberty, we our selves would become servants of corruption, and be brought in bondage to all sorts of fancies and imaginations; yet the whole world may now see, after the experience of many years run through, (and it is manifest by this confession) that the great and gracious God has not only kept us in that common unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, which the whole community of saints have, and shall in their generations come to, but also in the same truths both small and great, that are built thereupon, that any other of the best and more pure reformed churches

<sup>m</sup> 2 Pet. i. 19.

in their best times (which were their first times) have arrived to : This confession with- all holding forth a professed opposition to the common errors and heresies of these times. These two considerations have been taken from the seasons we have gone through.

Thirdly, Let the space of time itself, or days, wherein from first to last, the whole of this confession was framed and consented to by the whole of us, be duly considered by sober and ingenuous spirits: the whole of days in which we had meetings about it, (set aside the two Lord's days, and the first days meeting, in which we considered and debated what to pitch upon) were but eleven days ; part of which also was spent by some of us in prayer, by others in consulting ; in the end all agreeing. We mention this small circumstance to this end, (which still adds to the former) That it gives demonstration, not of our freeness and willingness only, but of our readiness and preparedness to so great a work ; which otherwise, and in other assemblies, has ordinarily taken up long and great debates, as in such a variety of matters of such concernment, may well be supposed to fall out. And this is no other than what the apostle Peter <sup>n</sup> exhorts to, " Be ready always to give

<sup>n</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 15.

## THE PREFACE. xiii.

“ an answer to every man that asks you a reason, or account of the hope that is in you.” The apostle ° Paul says of the spiritual truths of the gospel, That “ God hath prepared them for those that love him.” The inward and innate constitution of the new creature being in itself such as is suited to all those truths, as congenial thereto: But tho’ there be this mutual adaptness between these two, yet there is so great a mixture of ignorance, darkness and unbelief, carnal reason, pre-occupation of judgment, interest of parties, wantonness in opinion, proud adhering to our own persuasions, and perverse oppositions to, and averfeness to agree with others, and a multitude of such like distempers common to believing man: All which are not only mixed with, but at times, (especially in such times as have passed over our heads) are ready to overcloud our judgments, and cause our eyes to be double, and sometimes prevail as well as lusts, and byass our wills and affections: And such is their mixture, that tho’ there may be existent an habitual preparedness in mens spirits, yet there is not always a present readiness to be found, especially not in such a various multitude of men, to make a solemn and deliberate profession of all truths; it being as great a work to find the spirits of

° 1 Cor. ii. 9.

the just (perhaps the best of saints,) ready for every truth, as to be prepared to every good work.

Fourthly, It is to be looked at as a great and special work of the holy Ghost, that so numerous a company of ministers, and other principal brethren, should so readily, speedily and jointly give up themselves to such a whole body of truths that are after godliness.

This argues they had not their faith to seek; but, as is said of Ezra,<sup>p</sup> that they were ready scribes, and as Christ says, instructed to the kingdom of heaven, being as the good householders of so many families of Christ, “<sup>q</sup> bringing forth of their store and treasury things new and old.” It shews these truths had been familiar to them, and they acquainted with them, as with their daily food and provision, (as Christ’s allusion there insinuates) in a word, that so they had preached, and that so their people had believed, as the apostle speaks upon a like particular occasion<sup>r</sup>. And the apostle Paul considers (in cases of this nature) the suddenness or length of the time, either one way or the other; whether it were in mens forsaking or learning of the truth. Thus the suddenness in the Galatians case in leaving the truth, he<sup>s</sup> makes a wonder at it: “I mar-

<sup>p</sup> Ezra vii. 6. <sup>q</sup> Mat. xiii. 52. <sup>r</sup> 1 Cor. xv. 11. <sup>s</sup> Gal. i. 6.



## THE PREFACE.

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vel that you are so soon (that is, in so short a time) removed from the true gospel to another. "Again on the contrary, in the Hebrews, he aggravates their backwardness, 'That when for the time you ought to be teachers, you have need that one teach you the very first principles of the oracles of God.'" The contrary to both these having fallen out in this transaction, may have some weight with ingenuous spirits in its kind, according as the proportion is put upon either of these forementioned, in their adverse kind, and obtain the like special observation.

This accord of ours hath fallen out without having held any correspondence together, or prepared consultation by which we might come to be advised of one another's minds. We alledge not this as a matter of commendation in us; no, we acknowledge it to have been a great neglect: And accordingly one of the first proposals for union amongst us was, That there might be a constant correspondence held among the churches for counsel and mutual edification, for time to come, to prevent the like omission.

We confess, that from the first, every, or at least the generality of our churches, have been in a manner like so many ships (tho' holding forth the same general colours)

<sup>1</sup>Heb. v. 12.

lanch'd singly, and sailing apart and alone in the vast ocean of these tumultuating times, and they exposed to every wind of doctrine, under no other conduct than the word and spirit, and their particular elders and principal brethren, without associations among themselves, or so much as holding out common lights to others, whereby to know where they were.

But yet whilst we thus confess to our own shame this neglect, let all acknowledge, that God has ordered it for his high and greater glory; in that his singular care and power should have so watch'd over each of these, as that all should be found to have steered their course by the same chart, and to have been bound for one and the same port, and that upon this general search now made, the same holy and blessed truths, of all sorts, which are current and warrantable amongst all the other churches of Christ in the world, should be found to be our lading.

The whole, and every of these things when put together, cause us (whatever men of prejudiced and opposite spirits may find out to slight them) with a holy admiration, to say, That this is no other than the Lord's doing; and which we with thanksgiving take from his hand as a special token upon us for good, which shews that God is faithful and upright towards those that are planted in his house: And that as the faith was but  
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## THE PREFACE. xvii

once for all, and intentionally first delivered to the saints; so the saints when not abiding scattered, but gathered under their respective pastors, according to God's heart, into an house and churches to the living God; such together are, as Paul forespoke it, the most steady and firm pillar and seat of truth that God has any where appointed to himself on earth, where his truth is best conserved, and publicly held forth; there being in such assemblies weekly a rich dwelling of the word amongst them, that is, a daily open house kept, by the means of those good householders, their teachers and other instructors respectively appropriated to them, whom Christ in the virtue of his ascension, continues to give as gifts to his people, himself dwelling amongst them; to the end that by this, as the most sure standing permanent means, the saints might be perfected, till we all (even all the saints in present and future ages) come, by this constant and daily ordinance of his, to "the unity of the faith and knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" <sup>u</sup> (which tho' growing on by parts and piecemeal, will yet appear compleat, when that great and general assembly shall be gathered, when this world is ended, and these dispensations

<sup>u</sup> Eph. iv. 12, 14.

have had their fulness and period) and “ so that from henceforth (such a provision being made for us) we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine.” This gives a fresh and recent demonstration, that the great apostle and high-priest of our profession is indeed ascended into heaven, and continues there with power and care, “ faithful as a son over his own house, whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm to the end: ” <sup>w</sup> and shews that he will, as he has<sup>\*</sup> promised, be with his own institutions to the end of the world.

It is true, that many sad miscarriages, divisions, breaches, fallings off from holy ordinances of God, have along this time of temptation, (especially in the beginning of it) been found in some of our churches; and no wonder, if what hath been said be fully considered: Many reasons might farther be given hereof, that would be a sufficient apology, without the help of a retortion upon other churches, (that promised themselves peace,) that more destroying ruptures have befallen them, and that in a wider sphere and compass; which tho’ it should not justify us, yet may serve to stop others mouths.

Let Rome glory of the peace and obedience

<sup>w</sup> Heb. iii. 6.

<sup>\*</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20.

## THE PREFACE. xix

of her children, against the reformed churches, for their divisions that occurred (especially in the first rearing of them) whilst we all know the causes of their dull and stupid peace to have been carnal interests, worldly correspondencies, and coalitions strengthened by gratifications of all sorts of men by that religion, the principles of blind devotion, traditional faith, ecclesiastical tyranny, by which she keeps her children in bondage to this day. We are also certain, that the very same prejudices that from hence they would cast upon the reformed (if they were just) lie as fully against those pure churches raised by the apostles themselves in the first times: for as we have heard of their patience, sufferings, consolations, and the transcending gifts poured out, and graces shining in them, so we have heard complaints of their divisions too, of the forsakings of their assemblies, as the custom or manner of <sup>y</sup> some was (which latter were in that respect felones de se, and needed no other delivering up to Satan as their punishment, than what they executed upon themselves.) We read of the shipwreck also of faith and a good conscience, and overthrowings of the faith of some; and still but of some, not all, nor the most: which is one piece of an apology the apostle again

<sup>y</sup> Heb. x. 22.

and again inserts to future ages, and through mercy we have the same to make.

And truly we take the confidence professedly to say, that these temptations common to the purest churches of saints, separated from the mixture of the world, tho' they grieve us (for who is offended, and we burn not?) yet they do not at all stumble us as to the truth of our way, nor would they, had they been many more: We say it again, these stumble us no more (as to that point) than it offends us against the power of religion itself, to have seen, and to see daily in particular persons called out, and separated from the world, by an effectual work of conversion, that they, for a while suffer under disquietment, vexations, turmoils, unsettlements of spirit, that they are tossed with tempests and horrid temptations, such as they had not in their former state, whilst they walked according to the course of this world: For Peter <sup>z</sup> has sufficiently instructed us whose business it is to raise such storms, even the Devils; and also whose design it is, that after they have suffered a while, thereby they shall be settled, perfected, stablished, that have so suffered, even of the God of all grace. What course of dispensation God holds to saints personally, he does the like to bodies of saints in churches,

<sup>z</sup> 1 Pet. v. 10.



and the devil the same for his part too. That consolatory maxim of the apostle, God shall tread down Satan under your feet shortly, which<sup>a</sup> Paul uttered concerning the church of Rome, shews how both God and Satan have this very hand therein; for he speaks that very thing in reference to their divisions, as the coherence clearly manifests; and so we have both designs exprest at once.

We are not a little induced to think, that the divisions and breaches of those primitive churches would not have been so frequent among the people themselves, and not the elders only, had not the freedom, liberties and rights of the members, (the brethren we mean) stated and exercised in those churches, been the same which we maintain and contend for to be in ours.

Yea (which perhaps may seem more strange to many) had not those churches been constituted of members inlightened farther than with notional and traditional knowledge, by a new and more powerful light of the holy Ghost, whereby they had been made partakers of the holy Ghost and the heavenly gift, and their hearts had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and of such members at lowest, there had not fallen out those kinds of divisions among them.

For experience has shew'd, that the common sort of mere doctrinal professors (such

<sup>a</sup> Rom. xvi. 10.

as the most are now a days) whose highest elevation is but freedom from moral scandal, joined with devotion to Christ, through mere education, such as in many Turks is found towards Mahomet; finding and feeling themselves not much concerned in the active part of religion, if they may have the honour (especially upon a reformation, or a new refinement) that themselves are approved members, admitted to the Lord's supper, and their children to the ordinance of baptism; they regard not other matters (as Gallio did not) but easily and readily give up themselves to their guides, being like dead fishes carried with the common stream; whereas those that have a farther renewed light, by a work of the holy Ghost, whether saving or temporary, are, upon the quite contrary grounds, apt to be busy about, and inquisitive into, what they are to receive and practise, or wherein their consciences are professedly concerned and involved: And thereupon they take the freedom to examine and try the spirits, whether they are of God or no: And from hence are apt to be dissatisfied, and from thence to run into division; and many of such proving to be enlightened but with a temporary, not saving faith, or to have such a work of the Spirit upon them, and profession in them, as will and does approve itself to the judgment of saints, and ought to do so, till they  
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are otherwise discovered, they at long run prove hypocrites, through indulgence to lusts, and then out of their lusts persist to hold up these divisions to the breach of, or departings from churches, and the ordinances of God; and God is even with them for it, they waxing worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived; and even many of those that are sincere, through a mixture of darkness and erroneoufness in their judgments, are for a season apt, out of conscience, to be led away with the error of others, which lie in wait to deceive.

Since the apostle, upon the example of those first times, foreseeing also the like events in following generations, upon the like causes, has been bold to set this down as a ruled case, that likewise in other churches, so constituted, and de facto emprivileged, as that of the church of Corinth was, (which single church, in the sacred records about it, is the compleatest mirror of church-constitution, order and government, and events thereon ensuing, of any one church whatever that we have story of) his maxim is, <sup>b</sup>“ There must be also divisions amongst you;” he setly inserts an [also] in the case, as that which had been in his own observation, and that which would be ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ the fate of other churches like thereto; so prophesied

<sup>b</sup> 1. Cor, xi. 19.

he: And he speaks this as peremptorily as he does elsewhere, that<sup>c</sup> “ We must through many tribulations enter into the kingdom of heaven:” and that<sup>d</sup> “ all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution:” There is a [must] upon both alike, and we bless God, that we have run thro’ both, and say, and we say no more; That as it was then, so it is now in both respects.

However, such hath been the powerful hand of God’s providence in these, which have been the worst of our tryals, That on an approved experience and observation of the issue, we are able to add that other part of the apostle’s prediction, That such rents must be, that they that are approved may be made manifest among us; which holy issue God (as having aimed at it therein) frequently and certainly brings about in churches, as he brings upon them that other fate of division. Let them therefore look to it, that are the authors of such disturbances; but they bear their judgment as the<sup>e</sup> apostle warns: The experiment is this, That we have seen and daily see, that multitudes of holy and precious souls, and (in the holy Ghost’s word) approved saints, have been, and are the more rooted and grounded by means of these shakings, and continue to cleave the faster to Christ and the purity of his ordi-

<sup>c</sup> Acts xiv. 22.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Tim. iii. 12.

<sup>e</sup> Gal. v. 10.

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nances, and value them the more, by this cost God hath put them to, for the enjoying of them, who having been planted in the house of the Lord, have flourished in the courts of our God, in these evil times, to shew that the Lord is upright. And this experimented event from out of such divisions has more confirmed us, and is a louder apology for us, than all that our opposites are able, from our breaches, to allegeto prejudice us.

We will add a few words for conclusion, and give a more particular account of this our declaration. In drawing up this confession of faith, we have had before us the articles of religion, approved and passed by both houses of parliament<sup>f</sup>, after advice had with an assembly of divines, called together by them for that purpose. To which confession, for the substance of it, we fully assent, as do our brethren of New-England, and the churches also of Scotland, as each in their general synods have testified.

A few things we have added for obviating some erroneous opinions, that have been more broadly and boldly here of late maintained by the asserters, than in former times; and made other additions and alterations in method, here and there, and some clearer explanations, as we found occasion.

We have endeavoured throughout, to hold to such truths in this our confession, as are

<sup>f</sup>June 20. 1648.

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more properly termed matters of faith; and what is of church-order, we dispose in certain propositions by it self. To this course we are led by the example of the honourable houses of parliament, observing what was established, and what omitted by them, in that confession the assembly presented to them. They thought it not convenient to have matters of discipline and church-government put into a confession of faith, especially such particulars, as then were, and still are controverted, and under dispute by men orthodox and sound in faith. The thirtieth chapter therefore of that confession, as it was presented to them by the assembly which is of church-censures, their use, kinds, and in whom placed; as also the thirty first chapter of synods and councils, by whom to be call'd, of what force in their decrees and determinations: And the fourth paragraph of the twentieth chapter which determines what opinions and practices disturb the peace of the church, and how such disturbers ought to be proceeded against by the censures of the church, and punished by the civil magistrate; also a great part of the twenty fourth chapter of marriage and divorce; These were such doubtful assertions, and so unsuitable to a confession of faith, that the honourable houses, in their great wisdom, thought fit to lay them aside: there being nothing that tends more to  
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## THE PREFACE. xxvij

heighten dissentings among brethren, than to determine and adopt the matter of their difference under so high a title, as to be an article of our faith: So that there are two whole chapters, and some paragraphs in other chapters in their confession, that we have upon this account omitted; and we the rather give this notice, because that copy of the parliaments, followed by us, is in few mens hands; the other as it came from the assembly, being approved of in Scotland, was printed and hastened into the world before the parliament had declared their resolutions about it<sup>h</sup>; and yet has been, and continues to be the copy (ordinarily) only sold, printed and reprinted, for these eleven years.

After the nineteenth chapter of the law, we have added a chapter of the gospel, it being a title that may not well be omitted in a confession of faith: In which chapter, what is dispersed, and inserted by intimation in the assemblies confession, with some little addition, is here brought together, and more fully under one head.

That there are not scriptures annexed, as in some confessions (tho' in divers others it is otherwise) we give the same account as did the <sup>i</sup>reverend assembly in the same case; which was this; "The confession being large, and so framed, as to meet with the

<sup>2</sup> Aug. 1647. <sup>h</sup> Which was not till June 20. 1648. <sup>i</sup> Session. 786.



common errors, if the scriptures should have been alleged with any clearness, and by shewing where the strength of the proof lies, it would have required a volume."

We say farther, it is our utmost end in this, (as it is indeed of a confession,) humbly to give an account what we hold and assert in these matters; that others, especially the churches of Christ may judge of us accordingly. This we aimed at, and not so much to instruct others, or convince gain-sayers. These are the proper works of other institutions of Christ, and are to be done in the strength of express Scripture. A confession is an ordinance of another nature.

What we have laid down and asserted about churches and their government, we humbly conceive to be the order which Christ himself hath appointed to be observed; we have endeavoured to follow scripture-light; and those also that went before us, according to that rule, desirous of nearest uniformity with reforming churches, as with our brethren in New-England, so with others, that differ from them and us.

The models and platforms of this subject laid down by learned men, and practised by churches, are various: We do not judge it brotherly, or grateful, to insist upon comparisons, as some have done; but this experience teaches, That the variety, and possibly the disputes and emulations arising  
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thence, have much strengthened, if not fixed, this unhappy persuasion in the minds of some learned and good men, namely, That there is no settled order laid down in scripture; but it is left to the prudence of the Christian magistrate, to compose or make choice of such a form as is most suitable and consistent with their civil government. Where this opinion is entertained in the persuasion of governors, there, churches asserting their power and order to be *jure divino*, and the appointment of Jesus Christ, can have no better nor more honourable entertainment, than a toleration or permission.

Yet herein there is this remarkable advantage to all parties that differ, about what in government is of Christ's appointment; in that such magistrates have a far greater latitude in conscience, to tolerate and permit the several forms of each so bound up in their persuasion, than they have to submit to what the magistrate shall impose: And thereupon the magistrate exercising an indulgence and forbearance, with protection and encouragement to the people of God, so differing from him, and amongst themselves, therein discharges as great a faithfulness to Christ, and love to his people, as can any way be supposed and expected from any Christian magistrate, of what persuasion soever he is. And where this clemency from a governor is shewed to any sort of persons

sons or churches of Christ upon such a principle, it will in equity produce this just effect, that all who so differ from him, and amongst themselves, standing in equal and alike difference from the principle of such a magistrate, he is equally free to give a like liberty to them, one as well as the other.

This faithfulness in our governors we with thankfulness to God acknowledge, and to their everlasting honour, which appeared much in the late reformation. The hierarchy, common-prayer-book, and all other things grievous to God's people, being removed, they made choice of an assembly of learned men, to advise what government and order is meet to be established in the room of these things; and because it was known there were different opinions (as always have been among godly men) about forms of church-government, there was by the ordinance first sent forth, to call an assembly, not only a choice made of persons of several persuasions to sit as members there, but liberty given, to a less number, if dissenting, to report their judgments and reasons, as well and as freely as the major part.

Hereupon the honourable house of commons (an indulgence we hope will never be forgotten) finding by papers received from them, that the members of the assembly were not like to compose differences amongst themselves, so as to join in the same rule  
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## THE PREFACE. xxx

for church government, order'd farther as followeth: That a committee of lords and commons, do take into consideration the differences of the opinions in the assembly of divines, in point of church government, and do endeavour a union if it be possible; and in case that cannot be done do endeavour the finding out some way, how far tender consciences, who cannot in all things submit to the same rule, which shall be established; may be born with according to the word, and as may stand with the publick peace.

By all which it is evident the parliament purposed not to establish the rule of church-government with such rigor, as might not permit and bear with a practice different from what they had established; in persons and churches of different principles, if occasion were. And this Christian clemency and indulgence in our governors, has been the foundation of that freedom and liberty, in the managing of church-affairs, which our brethren as well as we, that differ from them, do now, and have many years enjoyed.

The honourable houses by several ordinances of parliament, after much consultation, having settled rules for church-government, and such an ecclesiastical order, as they judged<sup>k</sup> would best join with the laws and government of the kingdom, publish'd them, requiring the practice hereof through-

<sup>k</sup> Ordinance of March 14. 1645.



## xxxii THE PREFACE.

out the nation; and in particular, by the ministers of the province of London. But (upon the former reason, or the like charitable consideration) these rules were not imposed by them under any penalty, or rigorous enforcement, though frequently urged thereto by some.

Our reverend brethren of the province of London, having considered of these ordinances, and the church-government laid down in them, declared<sup>1</sup> their opinions to be, "That there is not a complete rule in those ordinances"; also "that there are many necessary things not yet established, and some things wherein their consciences are not so fully satisfied." These brethren, in the same paper, have published also their joint "resolution to practise in all things according to the rule of the word, and according to these ordinances, so far as they conceive them correspond to it, and in so doing they trust they shall not grieve the spirit of the truly godly, nor give any just occasion to them that are contrary minded, to blame their proceedings."

We humbly conceive (that we being dissatisfied in these things as our brethren) the like liberty was intended by the honourable houses, and may be taken by us of the congregational way (without blame or grief to the spirits of those brethren at least) to re-

<sup>1</sup> Considerations and cautions from Sion Coll. June 19. 1646.



## THE PREFACE. xxxiii

solve or rather to continue in the same resolution and practice in these matters, which indeed were our practices in times of greatest opposition, and before this reformation was begun.

And as our brethren, the ministers of London, drew up and published their opinions and apprehensions about church government into an intire system; so we now give the like publick account of our consciences, and the rules by which we have constantly practised hitherto; which we have here drawn up, and do present. Whereby it will appear how much, or how little we differ in these things from our presbyterian brethren.

And we trust there is no just cause why any man, either for our differing from the present settlement, it being out of conscience, and not out of contempt, or our differences one from another, being not wilful, should charge either of us with that odious reproach of schism. And indeed, if not for our differing from the state-settlement, much less because we differ from our brethren, our differences being in some less things, and circumstances only, as themselves<sup>m</sup> acknowledge. And let it be farther considered, that we have not broke from them or their order by these differences (but rather

<sup>m</sup> Jus divinum Minist, published by the Province of London in the Preface.

they from us) and in that respect we less deserve their censure; our practice being no other than what it was in our breaking from episcopacy, and long before presbytery, or any such form as now they are in, was taken up by them; and we will not say how probable it is that the yoke of episcopacy had been upon our neck to this day, if some such way (as formerly, and now is, and hath been termed schism) had not with much suffering been then practised, and since continued in.

For novelty, wherewith we are likewise both charged by the enemies of both, it is true, in respect of the publick and open profession, either of presbytery or independency, this nation has been a stranger to each way, it is possible, ever since it hath been Christian; though for our selves, we are able to trace the footsteps of an independent congregational way in the ancientest customs of the churches, as also in the writings of our soundest protestant divines, and (which we are much satisfied in) a full concurrence throughout, in all the substantial parts of church-government, with our reverend<sup>n</sup> brethren the old puritan non-conformists, who being instant in prayer and much sufferings, prevailed with the Lord, and we

<sup>n</sup> Puritanismus Anglican. by Dr. Ames near 50 years since, as the opinions of whitehead, Gilbe, Fox, Dearing, Greenham, Cartwright, Vener, Fulk, Whitaker, Rainold, Perkins, &c.

## THE PREFACE. xxxv

reap with joy, what they sowed in tears. Our brethren also that are for presbyterian subordinations, profess what is of weight against novelty for their way.

And now therefore seeing the Lord, in whose hand is the heart of princes, hath put into the hearts of our governors to tolerate and permit (as they have done many years) persons of each persuasion, to enjoy their consciences, though neither come up to the rule established by authority: And that which is more, to give us both protection, and the same encouragement that the most devoted conformists in those former superstitious times enjoyed, yea, and by a publick law to establish this liberty for time to come; and yet farther, in the midst of our fears, to set over us a prince that owns this Establishment, and cordially resolves to secure our churches in the enjoyment of these liberties, if we abuse them not to the disturbance of the civil peace; this should be a very great engagement upon the hearts of us all, tho' of different persuasions, to endeavour our utmost, jointly to promote the honour and prosperity of such a government and governors, by whatsoever means, which in our callings, as ministers of the gospel, and as churches of Jesus Christ, the prince of peace, we are any way able to do; as also to be peaceably disposed one towards another, and with mutual toleration to love

as brethren, notwithstanding such differences, remembering, as it is very equal we should, that the differences which are between presbyterians and independents, are differences between fellow-servants, and that neither of them have authority given from God or man, to impose their opinions, one more than the other. Seeing our governors, after so solemn an establishment, thus bear with us both, in our greater differences from their rule, after this, for any of us to take a fellow servant by the throat, upon the account of a less reckoning, nothing being due to him upon it, is to forget, at least not to exercise, that compassion and tenderness we have found, where we had less ground to challenge or expect it.

Our prayer to God is, That whereto we have already attained, we all may walk, by the same rule, and that wherein we are otherwise minded, God would reveal it to us in his due time.

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JOHN OWEN.

THOMAS GOODWIN.

PHILIP NYE.

WILLIAM BRIDGE.

JOSEPH CARYL.

WILLIAM GREENHIL.

GEORGE GRIFFITH, Scribe.

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DECLARATION  
OF THE  
FAITH AND ORDER  
OWN'D AND PRACTISED  
IN THE  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES  
IN  
ENGLAND.





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OWN'D IN THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

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CH A P. I.

*Of the holy Scripture.*

**A**lthough the light of nature,  
and the works of creation and  
providence, so far manifest  
the goodness, wisdom and power of  
God, as to leave men inexcusable ;  
yet they are not sufficient to give that  
knowledge of God and of his will,  
which is necessary to salvation: there-

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fore it pleased the Lord at sundry times, and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare his will to his church; and afterwards for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan and of the world, to commit the same wholly to writing: which makes the holy scripture to be most necessary; those former ways of God's revealing his will to his people, being now ceased.

2. Under the name of holy scripture, or the word of God written, are now contained all the books of the old and new Testament; which are these; of the old Testament, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, the first and the second books of Samuel, the first and the second books of the Kings, the first and the second books of the Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther,

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. 3

Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Songs, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi: Of the new Testament: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, The acts of the apostles, Pauls epistle to the Romans, his first and second to the Corinthians, his epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, his first and second to the Thessalonians, his first and second to Timothy, his epistles to Titus, to Philemon, the epistle to the Hebrews, the epistle of James, the first and second epistles of Peter, the first, second and third epistles of John, the epistle of Jude, the Revelation. All which are given by the inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.

3. The books commonly called Apocrypha, not being of divine inspiration, are no part of the canon of the scripture;

6 THE FAITH OF THE

scripture; and therefore are of no authority in the church of God, nor are they to be any otherwise approved, or made use of, than other human writings.

4. The authority of the holy scripture, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man or church; but wholly upon God, (who is truth it self) the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received, because it is the word of God.

5. We may be moved and induced by the testimony of the church, to an high and reverent esteem of the holy scripture. And the heavenliness of the matter, the efficacy of the doctrine, the majesty of the style, the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole, (which is, to give all glory to God,) the full discovery it makes of the only way of man's salvation, the many other incomparable excellencies, and the intire perfection thereof, are arguments whereby



## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES 7

by it abundantly evidences it self to be the Word of God; yet notwithstanding, our full persuasion and assurance of the infallible truth and divine authority thereof, is from the inward work of the holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts.

6. The whole counsel of God, concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life, is either expressly set down in scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from scripture; to which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelations of the Spirit, or traditions of men. Nevertheless we acknowledge the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary, for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the word: and that there are some circumstances, concerning the worship of God, and government of the church, common to human actions and societies, which are to be ordered by the light of nature,

8 THE FAITH OF THE

nature, and christian prudence, according to the general rules of the word, which are always to be observed.

7. All things in scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear to all: yet those things which are necessary to be known, believed and observed for salvation, are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain to a sufficient understanding of them.

8. The old Testament in Hebrew, (which was the native language of the people of God of old) and the new Testament in Greek, (which at the time of writing it, was most generally known to the nations) being immediately inspired by God, and by his singular care and providence kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentic; so that in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal to them. But because these original tongues

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. 9

tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have a right to and an interest in the scriptures, and are commanded in the fear of God to read and search them; therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language, of every nation into which they come, that the word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner, and through patience and comfort of the scriptures may have hope.

9. The infallible rule of interpreting scripture, is the scripture itself; And therefore when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture, (which is not manifold, but one) it must be searched and known by other places, that speak more clearly.

10. The supreme Judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence

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we are to rest, can be no other, than the holy scripture delivered by the Spirit; into which scripture so delivered, our faith is finally resolved.

## CHAP II.

*Of God and of the holy Trinity.*

**T**Here is but one only living and true God; who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions, immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute, working all things according to the Counsel of his own immutable and most righteous will, for his own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, the rewarder of them that diligently seek him; and withal, most just and terrible in his judgments, hating

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hating all sin, who will by no means clear the guilty.

2. God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in, and of himself; and is alone, in, and to himself, all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which he has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting his own glory in, by, to, and upon them: He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and he has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them, whatsoever himself pleases: In his sight all things are open and manifest, his knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent on the creature, so that nothing is to him contingent or uncertain: He is most holy in all his counsels, in all his works, and in all his commands. To him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service or obedience, as crea-

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tures,



tures, they owe to the Creator, and whatever he is farther pleased to require of them.

3. In the unity of the God head there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost: The Father is of none, neither begotten, nor proceeding; the Son is eternally begotten of the Father; the holy Ghost is eternally proceeding from the Father and the Son. Which doctrine of the Trinity is the foundation of all our communion with God, and comfortable dependence upon him.

### CHAP. III.

#### *Of God's eternal decree.*

**G**OD from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. 13

liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather establish'd.

2. Altho' God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass, upon all supposed conditions, yet has he not decreed any thing, because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass, upon such conditions.

3. By the decree of God for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated to everlasting life, and others fore-ordain'd to everlasting death.

4. These angels and men thus predestinated, and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably design'd, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

5. Those of mankind that are predestinated to life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, has chose in

Christ to everlasting glory, out of his mere free grace and love, without any fore-sight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions or causes moving him thereto, and all to the praise of his glorious grace.

6. As God has appointed the elect to glory, so has he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordain'd all the means thereto: wherefore they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called to faith in Christ, by his Spirit's working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept, by his power, through faith, to salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, or effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified and saved, but the elect only.

7. The rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will, whereby he extends

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. 15

extends or withholds mercy, as he pleases, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonour and wrath, for their sin to the praise of of his glorious justice.

8. The doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care, that men attending to the will of God revealed in his word, and yielding obedience thereto, may from the certainty of their effectual vocation, be assured of their eternal election. So will this doctrine afford matter of praise, reverence and admiration of God, and of humility, diligence, and abundant consolation to all that sincerely obey the gospel.

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## CHAP. IV.

*Of Creation.*

**I**T pleased God, the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein, whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days, and all very good.

2. After God had made all other creatures, he created man male and female, with reasonable and immortal souls, endued with knowledge, righteousness and true holiness, after his own image, having the law of God written in their heart, and power to fulfil it; and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject to change. Besides this law written in their hearts, they received a command  
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not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; which whilst they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures.

CHAP. V.

*Of Providence.*

**G**OD the Creator of all things, upholds, directs, disposes and governs all creatures, actions, and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible fore-knowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness and mercy.

2. Although in relation to the fore-knowledge and decree of God, the first cause, all things come to pass immutably, and infallibly; yet by the same providence he orders them to fall

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out,

out, according to the order of second causes, either necessarily, freely, or contingently.

3. God in his ordinary providence makes use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, at his pleasure.

4. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence, in that his determinate counsel extends itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men (and that not by a bare permission) which also he most wisely and powerfully bounds, and otherwise orders and governs in a manifold dispensation to his own most holy ends; yet so, as the sinfulness thereof proceeds only from the creature, and not from God, who being most holy and righteous, neither is, nor can be the author or approver of sin.

5. The most wise, righteous and gracious God oftentimes leaves, for a season,

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. 19

season, his own children to manifold temptations, and the corruption of their own hearts, to chastise them for their former sins, or to discover to them the hidden strength of corruption, and the deceitfulness of their hearts, that they may be humbled; and to raise them to a more close and constant dependence, for their support, upon himself, and to make them more watchful against all future occasions of sin, and for sundry other just and holy ends.

6. As for those wicked and ungodly men, whom God as a righteous judge for former sins, blinds and hardens, from them he not only withholds his grace, whereby they might have been enlightened in their understandings, and wrought upon in their hearts; but sometimes also withdraws the gifts which they had, and exposes them to such objects, as their corruption makes occasions of sin; and withal gives them over to their own lusts, the temptations

of the world, and the power of Satan; whereby it comes to pass that they harden themselves, even under those means which God uses for the softening of others.

7. As the providence of God in general reaches to all creatures, so after a most special manner it takes care of his church, and disposes all things to the good thereof.

## CH A P. VI.

*Of the fall of man, of sin, and of the punishment thereof.*

**G**OD having made a covenant of works, and life thereupon, with our first parents, and all their posterity in them, they being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, did wilfully transgress the law of their creation, and break the covenant in eating the forbidden fruit.

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## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. 22

2. By this sin they, and we in them, fell from original righteousness and communion with God; and so became dead in sin, and wholly defiled in all the faculties and parts of soul and body.

3. They being the root, and by God's appointment, standing in the room and stead of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed, and corrupted nature convey'd to all their posterity, descending from them, by ordinary generation.

4. From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, all actual transgressions proceed.

5. This corruption of nature during this life, remains in those that are regenerated; and tho' it is thro' Christ pardoned and mortified, yet both it self and all the motions thereof are truly and properly sin.

6. Every



6. Every sin, both original and actual, being a transgression of the righteous law of God, and contrary thereto, in its own nature brings guilt upon the sinner, whereby he is bound over to the wrath of God, and curse of the law, and so is made subject to death, with all miseries spiritual, temporal and eternal.

## CH A P. VII.

### *Of God's covenant with Man.*

**T**HE distance between God and the creature is so great, that tho' reasonable creatures owe obedience to him as their Creator, yet they could never have attained the reward of life, but by some voluntary condescension on God's part, which he has been pleased to express by way of covenant.

2. The first covenant made with man, was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. 13

in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.

3. Man, by his fall, having made himself incapable of life by that covenant, the Lord was pleased to make a second, commonly called the covenant of grace; wherein he freely offers to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ, requiring of them faith in him, that they may be saved, and promising to give to all those that are ordain'd to life, his holy Spirit to make them willing and able to believe.

4. This covenant of grace is frequently set forth in the scripture by the name of a Testament, in reference to the death of Jesus Christ the testator, and to the everlasting inheritance, with all things belonging to it, therein bequeathed.

5. Altho this Covenant hath been differently and variously administred, in respect of ordinances and institutions,

ons, in the time of the law, and since the coming of Christ in the flesh; yet for the substance and efficacy of it, to all its spiritual and saving ends, it is one and the same; upon the account of which various dispensations, it is called the old and new Testament.

## CHAP. VIII.

*Of Christ the Mediator.*

**I**T pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, according to a covenant made between them both, to be the Mediator between God and man; the prophet, priest, and king, the head and Saviour of his church, the heir of all things, and judge of the world; to whom he did, from all eternity, give a people to be his seed, and to be by him in time redeem'd, called, justified, sanctified, and glorify'd.

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2. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fulness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties, and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin, being conceived, by the power of the holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance: so that two whole perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion; which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ the only Mediator between God and man.

3. The Lord Jesus in his human nature, thus united to the divine, in the person of the Son, was sanctified and anointed with the holy Spirit above measure, having in him all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, in whom it pleased the Father that all ful-

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ness should dwell, to the end that being holy, harmless, undefiled, and full of grace and truth, he might be thoroughly furnished to execute the office of a mediator and surety; which office he took not to himself, but was thereto called by his Father, who also put all power and judgment into his hand, and gave him commandment to execute the same.

4. This office the Lord Jesus most willingly undertook which; that he might discharge, he was made under the law, and perfectly fulfil'd it, and underwent the punishment due to us, which we should have born and suffered, being made sin and a curse for us, enduring most grievous torments immediately from God in his soul, and most painful sufferings in his body, was crucified, and died, was buried, and remained under the power of death, yet saw no corruption, on the third day he arose from the dead with the same body in which he suffered, with  
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which also he ascended into heaven, and there sits at the right hand of his Father, making intercession, and shall return to judge men and angels at the end of the world.

5. The Lord Jesus by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which, he through the eternal Spirit, once offered up to God, has fully satisfied the justice of God, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father has given him.

6. Although the work of redemption was not actually wrought by Christ, till after his incarnation ; yet the virtue, efficacy and benefits thereof were communicated to the elect in all ages, successively, from the beginning of the world, in and by those promises, types, and sacrifices, wherein he was revealed and signified to be the seed of the woman, which should bruise the serpent's head, and the Lamb slain from the beginning

ginning of the world, being yesterday, to day, and for ever.

7. Christ in the work of mediation acts according to both natures, each nature doing that which is proper to itself; yet by reason of the unity of the person, that which is proper to one nature, is sometimes in scripture attributed to the person denominated by the other nature.

8. To all those for whom Christ has purchased redemption, he certainly and effectually applies and communicates same, making intercession for them, and revealing to them in and by the word, the mysteries of salvation, effectually persuading them, by his Spirit, to believe and obey, and governing their hearts by his word and Spirit, overcoming all their enemies by his almighty power and wisdom, in such manner and ways, as are most consonant to his wonderful and unsearchable dispensation.

C H A P. IX.

*Of Free-will.*

**G**OD has endued the will of man with that natural liberty and power of acting upon choice, that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to do good or evil.

2. Man in his state of innocence had freedom and power to will and to do that which was good, and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it.

3. Man by his fall into a state of sin, has wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so that a natural man being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereto.

4. When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace,  
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he frees him from his natural bondage under sin, and by his grace alone enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly nor only will that which is good, but also wills that which is evil.

5. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.

## C H A P. X.

### *Of Effectual Calling.*

**A**LL those whom God has predestinated to life, and those only, he is pleased, in this appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds, spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart

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hearts of stone, and giving them hearts of flesh, renewing their wills, and by his almighty power determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so, as that they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

2. This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from any thing at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, till being quickened and renewed, by the holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

3. Elect infants dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ, who works, when, and where, and how he pleases; so also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word.

4. Others not elected, tho' they may be called by the ministry of the word, and may have some common operations



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operations of the Spirit, yet not being effectually drawn by the Father, they neither do nor can come to Christ, and therefore cannot be saved; much less can men not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they profess: And to assert and maintain that they may, is very pernicious, and to be detested.

C H A P. XI.

*Of Justification.*

**T**Hose whom God effectually calls, he also freely justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and by accounting and accepting their persons as righteous, not for any thing wrought in them, or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; nor by imputing faith it self, the act of believing, or any

any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness, but by imputing Christ's active obedience to the whole law, and passive obedience in his death, for their whole and sole righteousness, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have not of themselves, but it is the gift of God.

2. Faith thus receiving and resting on Christ, and his righteousness, is the alone instrument of justification; yet it is not alone in the person justified, but is ever accompanied with all other saving graces, and is no dead faith, but works by love.

3. Christ by his obedience and death fully discharged the debt of all those that are justified, and did by the sacrifice of himself, in the blood of his cross, undergoing in their stead the penalty due to them, make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God's justice in their behalf: Yet in as much as he was given by the Father for them,

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and his obedience and satisfaction accepted in their stead, and both freely, not for any thing in them, their justification is only of free grace, that both the exact justice and rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners.

4. God from all eternity decreed to justify all the elect, and Christ in the fullness of time died for their sins, and rose again for their justification: Nevertheless, they are not justified personally, till the holy Spirit, in due time, actually applies Christ to them.

5. God continues to forgive the sins of those that are justified; and tho' they can never fall from the state of justification, yet they may by their sins, fall under God's fatherly displeasure: and in that condition they have not usually the light of his countenance restored to them, till they humble themselves, confess their sins, beg pardon, and renew their faith and repentance.

6. The justification of believers under the old Testament, was, in all these respects,

spects, one and the same with the justification of believers under the new Testament.

## CHAP. XII.

### *Of Adoption.*

**A**LL those that are justified, God vouchsafes, in and for his only Son Jesus Christ, to make partakers of the grace of adoption, by which they are taken into the number, and enjoy the liberties and privileges of the children of God, have this name put upon them, receive the spirit of adoption, have access to the throne of grace with boldness, are enabled to cry Abba Father, are pitied, protected, provided for, and chastened by him as by a Father, yet never cast off, but sealed to the day of redemption, and inherit the promises, as heirs of everlasting salvation.

## CHAP. XIII.

*Of Sanctification.*

**T**HEY that are united to Christ, effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, are also farther sanctified, really and personally, through the same virtue, by his word and Spirit dwelling in them; the dominion of the whole body of sin is destroyed, and the several lusts thereof are more and more weakened and mortified, more and more quickened and strengthened in all saving graces, to the practice of all true holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.

2. This sanctification is throughout in the whole man, yet imperfect in this life; there abides still some remnants of corruption in every part, whence arises a continual and irreconcilable



cileable war, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh.

3. In which war tho' the remaining corruption for a time may much prevail, yet, through the continual supply of strength, from the sanctifying Spirit of Christ, the regenerate part overcomes, and so the saints grow in grace, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

## CHAP. XIV.

### *Of saving Faith.*

**T**HE grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls, is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts, and is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the word; by which also, and by the administration of the seals, prayer, and other means, it is increased and strengthened.

1. By this faith a Christian believes

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to be true, whatsoever is revealed in the word, because of the authority of God himself speaking therein, and acts differently upon that which each particular passage thereof containeth, yielding obedience to the commands, trembling at the threatnings, and embracing the promises of God, for this life, and that which is to come. But the principal acts of saving faith are, accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone, for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace.

3. This faith, tho' it is different in degrees, and may be weak or strong, yet it is, in the least degree of it, different, in the kind or nature of it, (as is all other saving grace,) from the faith and common grace of temporary believers; and therefore, tho' it may be many times assailed and weakened, yet it gets the victory, growing up in many to the attainment of a full assurance through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith. CHAP.

## C H A P. XV.

*Of repentance to life and salvation.*

**S**UCH of the elect as are converted at riper years, having some time lived in the state of nature, and therein served divers lusts and pleasures, God in their effectual calling gives them repentance to life.

2. Whereas there is none that doth good, and sins not, and the best of men may, through the power and deceitfulness of their corruptions dwelling in them, with the prevalency of temptation, fall into great sins and provocations ; God has, in the covenant of grace, mercifully provided, that believers so sinning and falling shall be renewed through repentance to salvation.

3. This saving repentance is an evangelical grace, whereby a person being by the holy Ghost made sensible of the manifold evils of his sin, by faith  
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in Christ humbles himself for it, with godly sorrow, detestation of it, and self-abhorrency, praying for pardon and strength of grace, with a purpose, and endeavours, by supplies of the Spirit, to walk before God to all well-pleasing in all things.

4. As repentance is to be continued through the whole course of our lives, upon the account of the body of death, and the motions thereof; so it is every man's duty to repent of his particular known sins particularly.

5. Such is the provision which God has made through Christ in the covenant of grace, for the preservation of believers to salvation, that tho' there is no sin so small, but it deserves damnation; yet there is no sin so great, that it shall bring damnation on them who truly repent; which makes the constant preaching of repentance necessary.

CHAP. XVI.

*Of good works.*

**G**OOD works are only such as God has commanded in his holy word, and not such as, without the warrant thereof, are devised by men, out of blind zeal, or upon any pretence of good intentions.

2. These good works done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith, and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edifie their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereto, that having their fruit to holiness, they may have the end eternal life.

3. Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ: And that

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they



they may be enabled thereto, besides the graces they have already receiv'd, there is required an actual influence of the same holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do, of his good pleasure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent as if they were not bound to perform any duty, unless upon a special motion of the Spirit, but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them.

4. They who in their obedience attain to the greatest height which is possible in this life, are so far from being able to supererogate, and to do more than God requires, that they fall short of much, which in duty they are bound to do.

5. We cannot by our best works merit pardon of sin, or eternal life at the hand of God, by reason of the great disproportion there is between them, and the glory to come; and the infinite distance there is between us, and God, whom by them we

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can neither profit, nor satisfy for the debt of our former sins; but when we have done all we can, we have done but our duty, and are unprofitable servants: and tho' as they are good, they proceed from his Spirit, yet as they are wrought by us, they are defiled and mixed with so much weakness and imperfection, that they cannot endure the severity of God's judgment.

6. Yet notwithstanding, the persons of believers being accepted through Christ, their good works also are accepted in him, not as though they were in this life wholly unblameable and unreprieveable in God's sight, but that he, looking upon them in his Son, is pleased to accept and reward that which is sincere, tho' accompanied with many weaknesses and imperfections.

7. Works done by unregenerate men, tho' for the matter of them they may be things which God commands, and of good use both to themselves and to

others; yet because they proceed not from a heart purified by faith, nor are done in a right manner, according to the word, nor to a right end, the glory of God; they are therefore sinful, and cannot please God, nor make a man meet to receive grace from God; and yet the neglect of them is more sinful, and displeasing to God.

## CHAP. XVII.

### *Of the perseverance of the Saints.*

**T**HEY whom God hath accepted in his beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from a state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved.

2. This perseverance of the Saints depends not upon their own free-will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father, upon

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on the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, and union with him, the oath of God, the abiding of his Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace, from all which arises also the certainty and infallibility thereof.

3. And tho' they may, through the temptation of Satan, and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God's displeasure, and grieve his holy Spirit, come to have their graces and comforts impaired, have their hearts hardened, and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalise others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves; yet they are and shall be kept by the power of God through faith to salvation.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XVIII.

*Of the assurance of grace and salvation.*

**A**Ltho' temporary believers, and other unregenerate men may vainly deceive themselves with false hopes, and carnal presumptions of being in the favour of God, and in a state of salvation, which hope of theirs shall perish; yet such as truly believe in the Lord Jesus, and love him in sincerity, endeavouring to walk in all good conscience before him, may in this life be certainly assur'd, that they are in a state of grace, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, which hope shall never make them ashamed.

2. This certainty is not a bare conjectural and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith, founded on the blood and righteousness of Christ, revealed in the Gospel, and also upon  
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CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. 47

the inward evidence of those graces to which the promises are made, and on the immediate witness of the Spirit, testifying our adoption, and as a fruit thereof, leaving the heart more humble and holy.

3. This infallible assurance does not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties before he is partaker of it; yet being enabled by the Spirit to know the things which are freely given him of God, he may, without extraordinary revelation, in the right use of ordinary means, attain thereto: and therefore it is the duty of every one to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure, that thereby his heart may be enlarged in peace and joy in the holy Ghost, in love and thankfulness to God, and in strength and chearfulness in the duties of obedience, the proper fruits of this assurance; so far is it from inclining men to looseness.

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4. True believers may have the assurance of their salvation divers ways shaken, diminished and intermitted, as by negligence in preserving it, by falling into some special sin, which wounds the conscience, and grieves the Spirit, by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God's withdrawing the light of his countenance, suffering even such as fear him to walk in darkness, and to have no light; yet are they neither utterly destitute of that seed of God, and life of faith, that love of Christ and the brethren, that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which, by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance may in due time be revived, and by which in the mean time they are supported from utter despair.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XIX.

*Of the law of God.*

**G**OD gave to Adam a law of universal obedience written in his heart, and a particular precept of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as a covenant of works, by which he bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact and perpetual obedience, promised life upon the fulfilling, and threatened death upon the breach of it, and indued him with power and ability to keep it.

2. This law so written in the heart, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall of man, and was delivered by God upon the mount Sinai in ten commandments, and written in two tables; the four first commandments containing our duty towards God, and the other six our duty to man.

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3. Besides this law commonly called moral, God was pleased to give to the people of Israel ceremonial laws, containing several typical ordinances, partly of worship, prefiguring Christ, his graces, actions, sufferings and benefits, and partly holding forth divers instructions of moral duties: all which ceremonial laws being appointed only to the time of reformation, are by Jesus Christ the true Messiah and only law-giver, who was furnished with power from the Father for that end, abrogated and taken away.

4. To them also he gave sundry judicial laws, which expired together with the state of that people, not obliging any now, by virtue of that institution, their general equity only being still of moral use.

5. The moral law for ever binds all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof; and that not only in regard of the matter contain'd in it, but also in respect of the authority

rity of God the Creator, who gave it: neither does Christ, in the gospel, any way dissolve, but much strengthen, this obligation.

6. Altho true believers are not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified or condemned; yet it is of great use to them as well as to others, in that, as a rule of life, informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly, discovering also the sinful pollutions of their nature, hearts and lives, so that examining themselves thereby, they may come to farther conviction of humiliation for, and hatred against sin, together with a clearer sight of the need they have of Christ, and the perfection of his obedience. It is likewise of use to the regenerate, to restrain their corruptions, in that it forbids sin, and the threatenings of it serve to shew what even their sins deserve, and what afflictions in this life they may expect for them, tho



freed from the curse threatened in the law. The promises of it, in like manner, shew them God's approbation of obedience, and what blessings they may expect upon the performance thereof, tho not as due to them by the law, as a covenant of works; so that a man's doing good, and refraining from evil, because the law encourages to the one, and deters from the other, is no evidence of his being under the law, and not under grace.

7. Neither are the beforemention'd uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but they sweetly comply with it; the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man, to do that freely and chearfully, which the will of God revealed in the law requires to be done.

## CHAP. XX.

*Of the Gospel and of the extent of the  
Grace thereof.*

**T**HE covenant of works being broke by sin, and made unprofitable to life, God was pleased to give to the elect the promise of Christ, the seed of the woman, as the means of calling them, and begetting in them faith and repentance: In this promise, the gospel, as to the substance of it, was revealed, and was therein effectual for the conversion and salvation of sinners.

2. This promise of Christ, and salvation by him, is revealed only in and by the word of God; neither do the works of creation or providence, with the light of nature, make discovery of Christ, or of grace by him, so much as in a general or obscure way; much less that men destitute of the revelation of him, by the promise, or gospel, should be

be enabled thereby to attain saving faith or repentance.

3. The revelation of the gospel to sinners made in divers times, and by sundry parts, with the addition of promises and precepts for the obedience required therein, as to the nations and persons to whom it is granted, is merely of the sovereign will and good pleasure of God, not being annexed by virtue of any promise to the due improvement of men's natural abilities, by virtue of common light received without it, which none ever did, or can make: And therefore in all ages the preaching of the gospel has been granted to persons and nations, as to the extent or straitening of it, in great variety, according to the counsel of the will of God.

4. Although the gospel is the only outward means of revealing Christ and saving grace, and is, as such, abundantly sufficient thereto; yet that men who are dead in trespasses, may be  
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born again, quickened or regenerated, there is moreover necessary an effectual, irresistible work of the holy Ghost upon the whole soul, for the producing in them a new spiritual life, without which no other means are sufficient for their conversion to God.

### CHAP. XXI.

*Of Christian Liberty, and Liberty of Conscience.*

**T**HE liberty which Christ has purchased for believers under the gospel, consists in their freedom from the guilt of sin, the condemning wrath of God, the rigor and curse of the law, and in their being delivered from this present evil world, bondage to Satan, and dominion of sin, from the evil of afflictions, the fear and sting of death, the victory of the grave, and everlasting damnation; as also in their free access to God, and their yielding obedience to him, not out of slavish fear,

fear, but a child-like love and willing mind: All which were common also to believers under the law, for the substance of them; but under the new testament the liberty of Christians is farther enlarged in their freedom from the yoke of the ceremonial law, the whole legal administration of the covenant of grace, to which the jewish church was subjected, and in greater boldness of access to the throne of grace, and in fuller communications of the free Spirit of God, than believers under the law did ordinarily partake of.

2. God alone is Lord of the conscience, and has left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men, which are in any thing contrary to his word, or not contained in it; so that to believe such doctrines, or to obey such commands out of conscience, is to betray true liberty of conscience; and the requiring an implicit faith, and an absolute and blind obedience, is to destroy liberty of conscience, and reason also.

3. They



3. They who upon pretence of christian liberty practise any sin, or cherish any lust, as they thereby pervert the main design of the grace of the gospel, to their own destruction; so they wholly destroy the end of christian liberty, which is, that being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, we might serve the Lord without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our lives.

## C H A P. XXII.

*Of religious Worship, and the Sabbath-day*

**T**HE light of nature shews that there is a God, who has lordship and sovereignty over all, is just, good, and does good to all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served, with all the heart, and all the soul, and with all the might: But the acceptable way of worshiping the true God is instituted

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by himself, and is so limited by his own revealed will, that he must not be worshiped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy scripture.

2. Religious worship is to be given to God the Father, Son, and holy Ghost, and to him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creatures; and since the fall, not without a Mediator, nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.

3. Prayer with thanksgiving, being one special part of natural worship, is by God required of all men; but that it may be accepted, it is to be made in the name of his Son, by the help of his Spirit, according to his will, with understanding, reverence, humility, fervency, faith, love, and perseverance; and when with others, in a known tongue.

4 Prayer is to be made for things  
lawful,

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lawful, and for all sorts of men living' or that shall live hereafter, but not for the dead, nor for those of whom it may be known that they have sinned the sin to death.

5. The reading of the scriptures, preaching, and hearing the word of God, singing of psalms, as also the administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, are all parts of the religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to God, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear. Solemn humiliations, with fastings and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, are, in their several times and seasons, to be used in a holy and religious manner.

6. Neither Prayer, nor any other part of religious worship, is now under the gospel either tyed to, or made more acceptable by any place, in which it is performed, or towards which it is directed; but God is to be worshiped every where, in spirit and in truth; as in private families daily, and in secret

by each one by himself; so more solemnly, in the publick assemblies, which are not carelessly nor wilfully to be neglected, or forsaken, when God by his word or providence calls hereto.

7. As it is of the law of nature, that in general a proportion of time, by God's appointment, be set apart for the worship of God; so by his word in a positive, moral, and perpetual commandment, binding all men in all ages, he has particularly appointed one day in seven for a sabbath to be kept holy to him, which from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week, and from the resurrection of Christ was changed into the first day of the week, which in scripture is called the Lord's day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the christian sabbath, the observation of the last day of the week being abolished.

8. This sabbath is kept holy to the Lord, when men, after a due preparing

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ing their hearts, and ordering their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe a holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken up the whole time, in the public and private exercises of God's worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy.

### C H A P. XXIII.

#### *Of lawful Oaths and Vows.*

**A** Lawful oath is a part of religious worship, wherein the person swearing in truth, righteousness and judgment, solemnly calls God to witness what he asserts or promises, and to judge him according to the truth or falsehood of what he swears.

2. The name of God only is that by which men ought to swear, and it is to be used with all holy fear and reverence: Therefore to swear vainly, or rashly, by that glorious and dreadful



dreadful name, or to swear at all by any other thing, is sinful, and to be abhorred; yet as in matters of weight and moment an oath is warranted by the word of God under the new testament, as well as under the old; so a lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken.

3. Whosoever takes an oath warranted by the word of God, ought duly to consider the weightiness of so solemn an act, and therein to avouch nothing but what he is fully persuaded is the truth: neither may any man bind himself by oath to any thing, but what is good and just, and what he believes so to be, and what he is able and resolved to perform. Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath touching any thing that is good and just, being lawfully imposed by authority.

4. An oath is to be taken in the plain and common sense of the words, without equivocation or mental reservation:  
on:

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on: It cannot oblige to sin, but in any thing not sinful, being taken, it binds to performance, tho' to a man's own hurt; nor is it to be violated, tho' made to heretics or infidels.

5. A vow, which is not to be made to any creature, but to God alone, is of the like nature with a promissory oath, and ought to be made with the like religious care, and to be performed with the like faithfulness.

6. Popish monastic vows of perpetual single life, professed poverty, and regular obedience, are so far from being degrees of higher perfection, that they are superstitious and sinful snares, in which no Christian may intangle himself.

## C H A P. XXIV.

### *Of the civil Magistrate.*

**G**OD the supreme Lord and King of all the world, has ordained civil magistrates to be under him, over the  
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the people, for his own glory and the publick good; and to this end hath armed them with the power of the sword for the defence and encouragement of them that do good, and for the punishment of evil doers.

2. It is lawful for Christians to accept and execute the office of a magistrate, when called thereto: in the management whereof, as they ought especially to maintain justice and peace, according to the wholesome laws of each commonwealth; so for that end, they may lawfully, now under the new testament, wage war upon just and necessary occasions.

3. Although the magistrate is bound to encourage, promote, and protect the professors and profession of the gospel, and to manage and order civil administrations in a due subserviency to the interest of Christ in the world, and to that end to take care that men of corrupt minds and conversations do not licentiously publish and divulge blasphemies

phemies and errors, in their own nature, subverting the faith, and inevitably destroying the souls of them that receive them: Yet in such differences about the doctrines of the gospel, or ways of the worship of God, as may befall men exercising a good conscience, manifesting it in their conversation, and holding the foundation, not disturbing others in their ways or worship that differ from them; there is no warrant for the magistrate under the gospel to abridge them of their liberty.

4. It is the duty of the people to pray for magistrates, to honour their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience sake. Infidelity, or difference in religion, does not make void the magistrate's just and legal authority, nor free the people from their obedience to him: from which ecclesiastical persons are not exempted, much less has the pope any power or jurisdiction

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diction over magistrates in their dominions, or over any of their people, and least of all to deprive them of their dominions or lives, if he shall judge them to be hereticks, or upon any other pretence whatsoever.

## C H A P. XXV.

### *Of Marriage.*

**M**Arriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband at the same time.

2. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed, and for preventing of uncleanness.

3. It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent. Yet it is  
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the duty of Christians to marry in the Lord, and therefore such as profess the true reformed religion, should not marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly, be unequally yoked by marrying with such as are wicked in their lives, or maintain damnable heresy.

4. Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden in the word; nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man, or consent of parties, that those persons may live together as man and wife.

## C H A P. XXVI.

### *Of the Church.*

**T**HE catholick or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one under Christ, the head thereof, and is the spouse, the body, the fulness of him that fills all in all.

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2. The whole body of men throughout the world, professing the faith of the gospel, and obedience to God, by Christ, according to it, not destroying their own profession by any errors evertting the foundation, or unholiness of conversation, are, and may be called the visible catholick church of Christ, tho' as such, it is not intrusted with the administration of any ordinances; nor has it any officers to rule or govern in, or over the whole body.

3. The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error, and some have so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan: Nevertheless Christ always has had, and ever shall have a visible kingdom in this world, to the end thereof, of such as believe in him, and make profession of his name.

4. There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ, nor can the pope of Rome in any sense, be head thereof; but he is that antichrist, that

## CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES. 69

that man of sin, and son of perdition, who exalts himself in the church against Christ, and all that is called God, whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

5. As the Lord, in his care and love towards his church, has in his infinitely wise providence exercised it with great variety in all ages, for the good of them that love him, and his own glory: so according to his promise, we expect that in the latter days, antichrist being destroyed, the Jews called, and the adversaries of the kingdom of his dear Son broke, the churches of Christ being enlarged and edified, through a free and plentiful communication of light and grace, shall enjoy in this world a more quiet, peaceable and glorious condition, than they have yet enjoyed.

## C H A P. XXVII.

*Of the Communion of Saints.*

**A**LL saints that are united to Jesus Christ their head, by his Spirit and faith, tho' they are not made thereby one person with him, have fellowship in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection and glory: and being united to one another in love, they have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, publick and private, as conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man.

2. All saints are bound to maintain a holy fellowship and communion in the worship of God, and in performing such other spiritual services as tend to their mutual edification; as also in relieving each other in outward things, according to their several abilities and necessities: which communion, though especially to be exercised by

by them in the relations wherein they stand, whether in families or churches, yet as God offers opportunity, is to be extended to all those who in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

### *Of the Sacraments.*

**S**acraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace, immediately instituted by Christ, to represent him and his benefits, and to confirm our interest in him, and solemnly to engage us to the service of God in Christ, according to his word.

2. There is in every sacrament a spiritual relation, or sacramental union between the sign and the thing signified; whence it comes to pass, that the names and effects of the one are attributed to the other.

3. The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is  
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not conferred by any power in them, neither does the efficacy of a sacrament depend upon the piety or intention of him that administers it, but upon the work of the Spirit, and the word of institution, which contains, together with a precept authorizing the use thereof, a promise of benefit to worthy receivers.

4. There are only two sacraments ordained by Christ our Lord, in the gospel, that is to say, baptism and the Lord's supper; neither of which may be dispensed by any, but by a minister of the word lawfully called.

5. The sacraments of the old testament, in regard of the spiritual things thereby signified and exhibited, were, for substance, the same with those of the new.

CHAP. XXIX.

*Of Baptism.*

**B**aptism is a sacrament of the new testament, ordained by Jesus Christ to be to the party baptized a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his ingrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his being given up to God through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life; which ordinance is by Christ's own appointment to be continued in his Church till the end of the world.

2. The outward element to be used in this ordinance, is water, wherewith the party is to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost, by a minister of the gospel lawfully called.

3. Dipping the person into the water is not necessary, but baptism is rightly administred by pouring, or sprinkling water upon the person.

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4. Not only those that actually profess faith in, and obedience to Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized, and those only.

5. Although it is a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance, yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed to it, as that no person can be regenerated, or saved, without it; or that all that are baptized, are undoubtedly regenerated.

6. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered, yet notwithstanding, by the right use of this ordinance, the grace promised is not only offered, but really exhibited and conferred by the holy Ghost to such (whether of age, or infants,) as that grace belongs to, according to the counsel of God's own will, in his appointed time.

7. Baptism is to be but once administered to any person.

## C H A P. XXX.

*Of the Lord's Supper.*

**O**UR Lord Jesus in the night wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament of his body and blood, called the Lord's supper, to be observed in his churches to the end of the world, for the perpetual remembrance, and shewing forth the sacrifice of himself in his death, the sealing of all the benefits thereof to true believers, their spiritual nourishment, and growth in him, their farther ingagement in and to all duties which they owe to him, and to be a bond and pledge of their communion with him, and with each other.

2. In this sacrament Christ is not offered up to his Father, nor any real sacrifice made at all, for the remission of the sins of the quick or dead, but only a memorial of that one offering up of himself, by himself, upon the cross,

once for all, and a spiritual oblation of all possible praise to God for the same ; so that the popish sacrifice of the mass (as the papists call it) is most abominable, injurious to Christ's own only sacrifice, the alone propitiation for all the sins of the elect.

3. The Lord Jesus has in this ordinance appointed his ministers to pray and bless the elements of bread and wine, and thereby to set them apart from a common to a holy use, and to take and break the bread, to take the cup, and (they communicating also themselves,) to give both to the communicants, but to none who are not then present in the congregation.

4. Private masses, or receiving the sacrament by a priest, or any other alone, as likewise the denial of the cup to the people, worshiping the elements, the lifting them up, or carrying them about for adoration, and the reserving them for any pretended religious use, are all contrary to the nature of this sacrament,



sacrament, and to the institution of Christ.

5. The outward elements in this sacrament, duly set apart to the uses ordained by Christ, have such relation to him crucified, as that truly, yet sacramentally only, they are sometimes called by the name of the things they represent, to wit, the body and blood of Christ; tho' in substance and nature, they still remain truly and only bread and wine, as they were before.

6. That doctrine which maintains a change of the substance of bread and wine into the substance of Christ's body and blood (commonly called transubstantiation) by consecration of a priest, or by any other way, is repugnant not to scripture alone, but even to common sense and reason, overthrows the nature of the sacrament, and has been, and is the cause of manifold superstitions, and of gross idolatries.

7. Worthy receivers, outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this sacrament,

crament, do then also inwardly by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified, and all the benefits of his death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread or wine; yet as really, but spiritually, present to the faith of believers in that ordinance, as the elements themselves are to their outward senses.

8. All ignorant and ungodly persons, as they are unfit to enjoy communion with Christ, so are they unworthy of the Lord's table, and cannot without great sin against him, whilst they remain such, partake of these holy mysteries, or be admitted thereto; and all who receive unworthily, are guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, and eat and drink judgment to themselves.

## C H A P. XXXI.

*Of the state of Man after Death, and  
of the Resurrection of the Dead.*

**T**HE bodies of men after death return to dust, and see corruption, but their souls, (which neither die, nor sleep) having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them: The souls of the righteous being then made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies: And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness, reserved to the judgment of the great day: besides these two places for souls separated from their bodies, the scripture acknowledges none.

2. At the last day such as are found alive shall not die, but be changed;

and all the dead shall be raised up with the self same bodies, and no other, tho' with different qualities, which shall be united again to their souls for ever.

3. The bodies of the unjust shall by the power of Christ be raised to dishonour; the bodies of the just by his Spirit to honour, and shall be made conformable to his own glorious body.

## CHAP. XXXII.

### *Of the last Judgment.*

**G**OD has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by Jesus Christ, to whom all power and judgment is given of the Father; in which day not only the apostate angels shall be judged, but likewise all persons that have lived upon earth, shall appear before the tribunal of Christ, to give an account of their thoughts, words, and deeds, and to receive according to what they have done

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done in the body, whether good or evil.

2. The end of God's appointing this day, is for the manifestation of the glory of his mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect, and of his justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient: for then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive a fulness of joy and glory, with everlasting reward in the presence of the Lord, but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.

3. As Christ would have us to be certainly persuaded that there shall be a judgment, to deter all men from sin, and for the greater consolation of the godly in their adversity; so will he have that day unknown to men, that they may shake off all car-

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nal security, and be always watchful, because they know not at what hour the Lord will come, and may be ever prepared to say, Come Lord Jesus, come quickly. Amen.

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CHURCHES,  
AND THE  
ORDER  
APPOINTED IN THEM BY  
JESUS CHRIST.

**B**Y the appointment of the Father all power for the calling, institution, order or government of the church, is vested, in a supreme and sovereign manner, in the Lord Jesus Christ, as king and head thereof.

2. In the execution of this power, wherewith he is so entrusted, the Lord Jesus calls out of the world to com-

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munion with himself, those that are given to him by his Father, that they may walk before him in all the ways of obedience, which he prescribes to them in his word.

3. Those thus called (through the ministry of the word, by his Spirit) he commands to walk together in particular societies or churches, for their mutual edification, and the due performance of that publick worship, which he requires of them in this world.

4. To each of these churches thus gathered, according to his mind declared in his word, he has given all that power and authority, which is any way needful for their carrying on that order in worship and discipline, which he has instituted for them to observe, with commands and rules, for the due and right exerting and executing of that power.

5. These particular churches, thus appointed by the authority of Christ, and intrusted with power from him for  
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the ends before expressed, are each of them as to those ends, the seat of that power which he is pleased to communicate to his saints or subjects in this world, so that, as such, they receive it immediately from himself.

6 Besides these particular churches, there is not instituted by Christ any church more extensive or catholick, entrusted with power for the administration of his ordinances, or the execution of any authority in his name.

7. A particular church gathered and compleated according to the mind of Christ, consists of officers and members: The Lord Christ having given to such as he has called, who are united according to his appointment, in church-order, liberty and power to choose persons fitted by the holy Ghost for that purpose, to be over them, and to minister to them in the Lord.

8. The members of these churches are saints, by effectual calling visibly manifesting and evidencing, (in and  
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by their profession and walking) their obedience to that call of Christ, who being farther known to each other, by their confession of the faith wrought in them by the power of God, declared by themselves, or otherwise manifested, willingly consent, to walk together, according to the appointment of Christ, giving up themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God, in professed subjection to the ordinances of the gospel.

9. The officers appointed by Christ to be chose and set apart by the church so called, and gathered for the peculiar administration of ordinances, and execution of power or duty, which he intrusts them with, or calls them to, to be continued to the end of the world, are pastors, teachers, elders, and deacons.

10. Churches thus gathered and assembling for the worship of God, are thereby visible and public, and their assemblies (in what place soever they are,



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are, according as they have liberty or opportunity) are therefore churches or publick assemblies.

11. The way appointed by Christ for the calling of any person, fitted and gifted by the holy Ghost, to the office of pastor, teacher or elder in a church, is, that he be chose thereto by the common suffrage of the church it self, and solemnly set apart by fasting and prayer, with imposition of hands of the eldership of that church, if there be any before constituted therein: And to a deacon, that he be chose by the like suffrage, and set apart by prayer and the like imposition of hands.

12. The essence of this call of a pastor, teacher or elder to office, consists in the election of the church, together with his acceptation of it, and separation by fasting and prayer: And those who are so chose, tho' not set apart by imposition of hands, are rightly constituted ministers of Jesus Christ, in whose name and authority they exercise

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ercise the ministry to them so committed. The calling of deacons consists in the like election and acceptation, with separation by prayer.

13. Although it is incumbent on the pastors and teachers of the churches to be instant in preaching the word, by way of office; yet the work of preaching the word is not so peculiarly confined to them, but that others also gifted and fitted by the holy Ghost for it, and approved, being by lawful ways and means, in the providence of God called thereto, may publickly, ordinarily and constantly perform it; so that they give themselves up thereto.

14. However, they who are ingaged in the work of publick preaching, and enjoy the publick maintenance upon that account, are not thereby obliged to dispense the seals to any other than such as (being saints by calling, and gathered according to the order of the gospel) they stand related to, as pastors or teachers; yet ought they  
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not to neglect others living within their parochial bounds, but besides their constant publick preaching to them, they ought to enquire after their profiting by the word, instructing them in, and pressing upon them, (whether young or old,) the great doctrines of the gospel, even personally and particularly, so far as their strength and time will admit.

15. Ordination alone, without the precedent consent of the church, by those who formerly have been ordained, by virtue of that power they have received by their ordination, doth not constitute any person a church-officer, or communicate office-power to him.

16. A church furnished with officers, (according to the mind of Christ) has full power to administer all his ordinances; and where there is want of any one or more officers required, that officer, or those which are in the church, may administer all the ordinances proper to their particular duty and offices;

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but where there are no teaching officers, none may administer the seals, nor can the church authorise any so to do.

17. In the carrying on of church administrations, no person ought to be added to the church, but by the consent of the church it self; that so love without dissimulation may be preserv'd between all the members thereof.

18. Whereas the Lord Jesus Christ has appointed and instituted, as a means of edification, that those who walk not according to the rules and laws appointed by him (in respect of faith and life, so that just offence arises to the church thereby) be censured in his name and authority; Every church has power in it self to exercise and execute all those censures appointed by him, in the way and order prescribed in the gospel.

19. The censures so appointed by Christ are admonition and excommunication, and whereas some offences are or may be known only to some, it is appointed by Christ, that those to whom they  
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are so known, do first admonish the offender in private; in publick offences where any sin before all, or in case of non-amendment upon private admonition, the offence being related to the church, and the offender not manifesting his repentance, he is to be duly admonished in the name of Christ, by the whole church, by the ministry of the elders of the church; and if this censure prevails not for his repentance, then he is to be cast out by excommunication, with the consent of the church.

20. As all believers are bound to join themselves to particular churches, when and where they have opportunity so to do, so none are to be admitted to the privileges of the churches, who do not submit themselves to the rule of Christ in the censures of the government of them.

21. This being the way prescribed by Christ in case of offence, no church-members upon any offences taken by them, having performed their duty re-



quired of them in this matter, ought to disturb any church-order, or absent themselves from the publick assemblies, or the administration of any ordinances upon that pretence; but to wait upon Christ, in the farther proceeding of the church.

22. The power of censures being seated by Christ in a particular church, is to be exercised only towards particular members of each church respectively as such; and there is no power given by him to any synods or ecclesiastical assemblies to excommunicate, or by their publick edicts to threaten excommunication, or other church censures against churches, magistrates, or their people upon any account, no man being obnoxious to that censure, but upon his personal miscarriage, as a member of a particular church.

23. Although the church is a society of men, assembling for the celebration of the ordinances, according to the appointment of Christ, yet every society assembling for that end, or purpose, upon the account of cohabitation within any  
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civil precincts and bounds, is not thereby constituted a church, seeing there may be wanting among them, what is essentially required thereto; and therefore a believer living with others in such a precinct, may join himself with any church for his edification.

24. For the avoiding of differences that may otherwise arise, for the greater solemnity in the celebration of the ordinances of Christ, and the opening a way for the larger usefulness of the gifts and graces of the holy Ghost; saints living in one city or town, or within such distances as that they may conveniently assemble for divine worship, ought rather to join in one church for their mutual strengthening and edification, than to set up many distinct societies.

25. As all churches and all the members of them, are bound to pray continually for the good or prosperity of all the churches of Christ, in all places, and upon all occasions to farther it; (every one within the bounds of their places

ces and callings, in the exercise of their gifts and graces) so the churches themselves, (when planted by the providence of God, so as that they may have opportunity and advantage for it) ought to hold communion amongst themselves, for their peace, increase of love, and mutual edification.

26. In cases of difficulties or differences, either in point of doctrine, or in administrations, wherein either the churches in general are concerned, or any one church, in their peace, union, and edification, or any member or members of any church are injured in, or by any proceeding in censures, not agreeable to truth and order; it is according to the mind of Christ, that many churches holding communion together, do by their messengers meet in a synod or council, to consider and give their advice in, or about that matter in difference, to be reported to all the churches concerned; Howbeit these synods so assembled are not entrusted with any church-power, properly

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properly so called, or with any jurisdiction over the churches themselves, to exercise any censures, either over any churches or persons, or to impose their determinations on the churches or officers.

27. Besides these occasional synods or councils, there are not instituted by Christ any stated synods in a fixed combination of churches, or their officers in less or greater assemblies; nor are there any synods appointed by Christ in a way of subordination to one another.

28. Persons that are joined in church-fellowship, ought not lightly, or without just cause, to withdraw themselves from the communion of the church whereto they are so joined: Nevertheless, where any person cannot continue in any church without sin, either for want of the administration of any ordinances instituted by Christ, or by his being deprived of his due privileges, or compelled to any thing in practice not warranted by the word, or in case of persecution, or upon the account of



conveniency of habitation; he consulting with the church, or the officer or officers thereof, may peaceably depart from the communion of the church, wherewith he has hitherto walked, to join himself with some other church, where he may enjoy the ordinances in the purity of the same, for his edification and consolation.

29. Such reformed churches as consist of persons sound in the faith, and of conversation becoming the gospel, ought not to refuse the communion of each other, so far as may consist with their own principles respectively, though they walk not in all things according to the same rules of church-order.

30. Churches gathered and walking according to the mind of Christ, judging other churches (tho' less pure) to be true churches, may receive to occasional communion with them, such members of those churches as are credibly testified to be godly, and to live without offence.

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